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W. N. ARMSTRONG, EDITOR.

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## VETERAN CABINET MEMBER STEPS DOWN AND OUT

### W. O. Smith Leaves the Cabinet.

RETIRED WEDNESDAY A. M.

### Gives His Reasons Brief- ly—A Day's Political Sensation.

(From Thursday's Daily.)

William Owen Smith, who has been Attorney General here since the 17th day of January, 1893, is no longer connected with the Government. He retired from the Cabinet of President Dole yesterday morning. The resignation has been accepted. Mr. Dole, Mr. Smith and Capt. King are the only men who have been continuously in the Executive Council since the day the Provisional Government was organized. There have been three Ministers of Foreign Affairs and three Ministers of Finance.

The Board of Health is also without a President. Mr. Smith was a member by virtue of his office as Attorney General and had been placed at the head of the body.

In the middle of the forenoon it was known down town that Mr. Smith had left the high and honorable post which he had reached in the service of his native land. That it had long been his intention to retire to private life was well known, but the seeming suddenness of his leaving was rather a surprise. Mr. Smith had always said that so soon as annexation had been accomplished he desired to return to his law practice and his business interests.

It was his wish to take this step in August last, but he was prevailed upon by his colleagues and citizens who appreciated the value of his work, to remain till the change had been completed—that is until laws for the government of the Islands under the new relation had been enacted at Washington. Within a fortnight he had expressed the purpose of departing from the Executive Building at the end of this month.

The matter of the quick change in the Cabinet was gone over about town to the exclusion of the news brought by the Australia, talks on stock deals or even the war in the Philippines. Men who had been either openly or covertly opposed to Mr. Smith as a publicist were among the first to regret that the country was losing the labor of one so capable and energetic. Mr. Smith has been at the head of the Police Department for more than six years and his work here tells for itself. He has been the attorney in chief for the people throughout the whole group and has been a most successful prosecutor.

The Attorney General was asked why he resigned. Mr. Smith replied that while he had contemplated retiring from office for some time, and in fact his resignation had been in the hands of President Dole since last August, that his retiring abruptly at this time was due to an unfortunate condition of affairs which had arisen among the members of the Executive Council.

The unwarranted attack which had been publicly made upon himself and other members of the Council by another member, was so unjust that under the circumstances he deemed that he could not consistently with self respect and due regard for the public interests, remain in office.

Mr. Smith said that he was unwilling to enter further into details, but spoke of the great gratification he felt in regard to the manner in which the integrity of the Government had thus far been maintained. His thoughts seemed to turn back to the earlier periods of the Provisional Government and the Republic and the trying times through which the community had passed and spoke of how much it was a matter for congratulation that the high standard of public spirit in the community had enabled those responsible for the conduct of the Government to administer its affairs as successfully as they had.

He added that he believed he could safely say that heretofore no person in high office since the establishment of the Provisional Government had been controlled by motives of self-seeking.



WM. O. SMITH.

but that the guiding principle had been that only what would conserve the public interest.

Mr. Dole was asked if he desired to say anything about Mr. Smith's resignation.

He replied that Mr. Smith had sent in his resignation on August 13th, but would not press its acceptance if it would put the Government to much inconvenience. Mr. Smith had asked positively yesterday for its acceptance, and it would be accepted. He did not desire to say anything more on the subject.

He was also asked if he had the power, under existing conditions, to appoint an Attorney General. He said that he had instructions from Washington to fill any vacancies in the event of death or resignation.

In all of Mr. Smith's labors he has been earnest and indefatigable. He has brought the Board of Health to a remarkably comprehensive and efficient standard. If it is possible to say that such a tremendous and intelligent worker will be missed more in one place than in any other, it can be said that the heaviest loss falls on the Board of Health. He has had the deepest sense of the responsibilities which his Cabinet position carried and has not been content to depend upon office work wholly. He has not been above walking or driving about all parts of Honolulu and suburbs and by personal visits he is the best known Cabinet officer in the other Islands. His energy has been no less marvelous than his insight into the future and he has been a constant advocate of the construction of roads everywhere and the opening of wild lands for settlement. In all things he has been able to maintain a happy medium. While called aggressive and while acknowledged as a positive identity, he has always been considered safe and entirely careful. That Mr. Smith loves his country is but natural. He has planned for its future and he has put his shoulder to the wheel in efforts for its best interests at all times. A pleasant gentleman in private life, as a Cabinet Minister he has always been approachable. Decision was a marked point in his work of administration. He had a good legal training—has a good legal mind and is rapid in reaching conclusions.

W. O. Smith was one of the active men in defending the country in 1893. He assisted materially in the formation of the Provisional Government and was firm and courageous in all the trying situations of 1893-4. There were many dark days when the best of them were puzzled, but Mr. Smith was one of the few men always standing by the guns uncompromisingly. Mr. Smith could be the diplomat on occasion, for it was he more than any other man who handled numerous local assaults upon the Provisional Government.

In the uprising of 1893, the elements of leadership in Mr. Smith were brought out. He spent his time between the capitol building and the police station, though frequently in the field during the days of shooting. He was always in demand for advice and he labored incessantly night and day till the disturbance was concluded. No one can know what a great strength he was in many quarters during that trouble.

Mr. Smith is a man just on the threshold of middle life. In fact he is a young man. He was born on the Island of Kauai and was educated part-

ly here and partly abroad. He has been in the law almost from his boyhood. He is not a wealthy man, but will command a practice that will return him a handsome income.

To the very last the thoughts of Mr. Smith were for the people at Molokai, in whom he has taken the deepest interest. Every man, woman and child in the Settlement calls him friend. He has put the Settlement on a basis that few ever believed it could reach. The newest improvement is the installation of an enlarged water system.

It was the aim of Mr. Smith to improve himself for the fulfillment of his duties. He is probably the best posted man in the Islands on the subjects of quarantine, income tax, liquor licenses and taxation and tariff in general. As a Cabinet Minister Mr. Smith has been wholehearted in his work. His down-town office, carrying several trusts and the management of a number of estates, he placed in other hands. He devoted all of his time to his duties as President of the Board of Health, Attorney General and head of the Police Department. He speaks and reads and writes Hawaiian readily and correctly. This has been of great use to him in his office. In the way of dealing with the police officers and the district magistrates in the outside districts and in dealing with the natives in health matters. He took the helm during the cholera visitation and remained on duty day and night till the plague was driven from the shores.

The question of a successor to Mr. Smith comes up at once. There had been talk some time ago of Judge Cooper leaving the Foreign Office to become Attorney General on the retirement of Mr. Smith. Another plan broached was to offer the Attorney Generalship to A. G. M. Robertson. The names of Deputy Attorney General Dole and Marshal Brown have been mentioned. It is supposed that President Dole and the remainder of the Cabinet will announce a successor in a few days.

Mr. Smith has enjoyed the highest esteem of all the numerous men who have reported to him directly and indirectly during the past six years. These, with those who saw that the one who has been regarded as the strongest man in the Cabinet was leaving it, said yesterday that it would be extremely difficult to replace him in the public service. It was thought on Monday, after the appearance in this paper of an interview with Mr. Smith, that a Cabinet crisis was imminent. As Mr. Smith had often at late declared that he would retire at the first opportunity, it was rumored Monday and Tuesday mornings that he had left. It was known after Tuesday's meeting that certain relations were still strained and the people who watch public events were quite certain that some such thing as happened yesterday morning was on the schedule.

Just how much, if any effect, the published interviews of Mr. Damon have had on the situation cannot be conjectured any further than intimated in Mr. Smith's statement given above. It is known, however, that Mr. Smith has the record of being somewhat of a stayer himself when a difference of a light arises.

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## THE FIELD LABOR

Reports Made by Two of the  
Immigration Officers.

### IMPROVEMENT IN CONDITIONS

Sanitation—Treatment of Men by Lunas—  
The "Docking" System—Cause  
of Desertion.

Honolulu, Dec. 31, 1898.

J. A. King, Esq., President Board of  
Immigration.

Sir:—I have the honor herein to present the following report of conditions developed during the past five months, as found in the course of my duties as Inspector of Immigrants.

The period covered began August 1st, 1898, and ends December 31, 1898. In due order I have visited and inspected the plantations on the Islands of Kauai, Oahu, Maui and Hawaii, and made separate reports to you of those trips entering into such detail as seemed to me then advisable.

Three visits of investigation have been made to Oahu Plantation and one to Pioneer Mill Co., at Lahaina to arrive at the facts in regard to reported abuses. These visits have also been duly and exhaustively reported to you. I have understood, the end aimed at in the inspection duties of my office, to be the amelioration of possible, wrongful and harmful conditions of contract labor, due regard being paid to justice and the interests and rights of employers. This object has determined my actions, and where a plain pointing out of defects and abuses and polite request for abatement has met with prompt acquiescence, I have not thought it necessary to be more severe.

The laborers' quarters as to ventilation, cubic air space, drainage and general sanitary surroundings have been carefully examined and the necessary steps taken to remedy existing defects. I have made it a point to carefully question disinterested parties, who by the nature of their positions would be informed, as to the treatment of laborers by their overseers and in regard to any possible cause for complaint; and where complaints have been made I have found it a judicious course to pursue, to obtain both sides of the story. Beyond this I have quietly and unobserved watched the work of field gangs and so obtained data for an opinion as to the efficiency of the laborer and probable over stimulation on the part of the luna.

As to sanitary conditions, I am pleased to report in general a constant improvement all along the line in sanitary matters. Barracks built in recent years have for the most part been constructed on selected ground providing drainage where possible, with ample space beneath between floor and earth, provision being made for light and ventilation. Old quarters have few of the elements to be desired. I am convinced that from this time on improvement will be marked and equally certain that inspection has not been without its influence for good. Under conditions such as necessarily attend the collection of a body of low class labor sanitary rules applicable to an intelligent community are almost impossible of observance fully at first. Only the strictest regulations and absolute powers of execution can overcome the natural tendencies and habits of a cheap labor class.

The matter becomes simple and means efficacious only when a settled system of procedure suited to each locality is decided upon. Constant authoritative inspections and a detail whose sole business shall be to remove and care for refuse and attend to other matters of cleanliness is necessary and I am glad to say on many plantations, this methodical system is in active operation with the happiest results.

In most cases I have found ample living room, but what might be called the gregarious disposition of this class cause them to crowd together in what we would consider inadequate space, though ample accommodations were supplied and available. A deeply rooted dislike for a current of air in their sleeping quarters results in an active antagonism to ventilation and every crack and crevice is calked as far as possible. I have tried not to be hypercritical. I have not looked for cleanliness in a pig pen and I have not found it in a close room inhabited by six to eight Chinamen voluntarily huddled together, and I have not always placed the blame upon the management for an intentionally dammed drain retaining a mass of filth. These vile conditions, I have found, are at times the fact even on the best regulated and most carefully and liberally managed plantations. I must say the physical systems of these people seem to have accommodated themselves to these hard conditions and show a surprising immunity from the results one would naturally expect.

Together with improved sanitary surroundings I am able to report a lessening in the percentage of the sick. Where there was 5 per cent six months ago, today there is less than 2 per cent. I feel sure the results of better conditions will not only appeal to the aes-

thetic but will be marked by a lower death and sickness rate.

As to treatment: There exists in the public mind an impression that most managers and their subordinate overseers are simply slave drivers and brutal in their relations to the contract laborers. In general I have not found it so. My experience, which has been extended and intimate, leads me to the conclusion that the brutal luna is the exception, that the provocations to displays of temper are great and numerous and that only a self-controlled man can make a successful overseer. I have found that when complaints are made of ill treatment and are true, the laborer often has been as much to blame as the luna. I do not mean to excuse the luna from his unlicensed action, but I do say that I have never known an inoffensive man abused. Whatever has been the policy in the past at present strict injunctions are laid upon those in authority to refrain entirely from forcible means of compulsion under penalty of censure and discharge. So far has this had its effect that except on a few plantations even recourse to the courts is seldom allowed. I am now speaking of the majority; there are some places where desertions because of dissatisfaction are numerous and these have had my attention, I believe, with good results. In answer to the question "What means do you use to control your laborers outside of the appeal to the Courts?" the interviewed in all cases without exception has acknowledged the same means, viz: the system of arbitrary fines, otherwise called the "docking system." This system has been fruitful of complaints and strikes. The position from the employer's standpoint seems not unreasonable, but when the power of fining, by deduction of one quarter or one half or a whole day's wages, is left to the discretion of a luna in the field, the abuse of such power is bound to follow. Is it legal?

To insure a reasonable amount of care and diligence in their work, when a recourse to a civil suit for damages would be not only expensive, but farcical as against an irresponsible class, something in the way of private or corporation regulations is seen to be necessary, as also the means to enforce those regulations.

In conclusion I will say, that a wise foresight is impelling the management of most plantations to gradually approach such conditions as will be found necessary when an enforcement of labor contracts will be impossible. To this end a state of satisfaction with surroundings and treatment is seen to be most desirable.

Statistical tables have been ably collated for his report by Secretary Taylor and would be superfluous here.

The coming period I am convinced will show no delay or retrogression in the good work of improvement already so far advanced.

Respectfully submitted,  
CHAS. A. PETERSON,  
Inspector of Immigrants.

In regard to plantation labor troubles Mr. Taylor has the following to report to the Minister of the Interior:

Acting upon your instructions, I left Honolulu on June 17 for Maui to investigate certain troubles among Chinese contract laborers at Wailuku plantation, taking with me both Japanese and Chinese interpreters.

The trouble here was among the Manchurian laborers, and arose more out of a misunderstanding than anything else. Their dialect was the principal cause. I was also at Spreckelsville plantation to find out why so many laborers had deserted. Within a very short time one hundred and twenty-three men had deserted, who were under contract to the Quong Fung and Sam Sing Companies. Since my visit less desertions have taken place. On the 22d of June, I was at Honokaa investigating the desertions and complaints at the plantations between there and Hilo. During the first six months of the year the desertions of 82 Chinese and 388 Japanese had been reported.

There were 178 desertions from one plantation alone. When the police caught deserters from this plantation they would notify the manager, but he would tell them he did not want the men back. This action had a decidedly bad effect and is more the reason for the wholesale desertions throughout the Hamakua district. The manager said he got redress from the Immigration Company importing the men so he did not lose anything. The manager of the Kumamoto Immigration Company informed me that the desertions of Japanese brought here by his company had already been a loss to them of over \$3,700, and desertions were being reported by every mail. Since April last, the Japanese Government has allowed the Immigration Companies to exact a monetary bond from each laborer before leaving Japan, sufficient to cover the amount of the passage money, and on the event of desertion the Immigration Company confiscates the money deposited.

To arrive at the direct cause for so many desertions was a difficult task, but some of the reasons attributed are as follows:

- 1st. Debts caused by gambling.
- 2nd. Debts to plantation and storekeepers.
- 3rd. Ill treatment by lunas.
- 4th. Higher wages and easier work in the coffee districts.
- 5th. Men who were returned to Japan by the Government are gradually getting back, they arrive on the plantations contracted to, but almost immediately desert, intentionally.

I also made a visit to the Ewa Plantation and one to Waianae.

WRAY TAYLOR,  
Secretary, Bureau of Immigration.